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FAIRY TALES FROM FAR JAPAN

TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE

By

SUSAN BALLARD

Of the St. Hilda Mission Tokyo

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE

By

MRS. ISABELLA L. BISHOP, F.R.G.S.

Author of 'Unbeaten Tracks in Japan,' etc.

Illustrated by Forty-seven Engravings from Japanese Originals

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN Parts I. and II. of this little book I have written about Japan and the Japanese for those who would like a little information beyond the mere traveller's talk, but have not the leisure necessary for reading books of research. I have tried to write for such an audience as might be assembled at a mission work-party.

The Fairy Tales themselves will doubtless appeal to both old and young readers.

SUSAN BALLARD.

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PREFATORY NOTE

By Mrs. Isabella L. Bishop, F.R.G.S.

Author of 'Unbeaten Tracks in Japan,' etc.

I HOPE that the readers of this book will find it as attractive as I have done. It takes me back to long journeys in 1878, through the then scarcely known interior of Northern Japan, when, far away from Europeans, I lived among the common people, hearing their talk through my clever boy interpreter, and listening during the long evenings by many a family hearth to these and similar tales, which became as familiar to me as the 'Blue-Beard' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk' of my childhood.

On such stories the quaint, quiet children of Japan are brought up, and in this harmless myth-world they live, till the cares of life begin to press upon them; and in their turn they tell the same in the long winter evenings to grave-eyed gentle children of their own, and it is difficult to say whether the myths are dearer to the adult or the child.

Miss Ballard has done English readers a service in placing within their reach a few of the most popular specimens of Japanese fairy lore, showing the sort of pabulum on which Japanese children are reared. In their daily life, myth, legend, and fairy tale go alongside the

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Western learning taught in the schools, and help to keep up something of the poetic and romantic feeling which we have been used to regard as an element of Japanese character.

To adult readers I specially commend the preliminary chapter. In a very small compass it gives some important facts of which it is discreditable to be in ignorance, especially now that this brilliant and progressive empire has successfully asserted her claim to take equal rank with the civilized nations of Europe.

It is noteworthy, and this chapter makes it very clear, that many of the myths of Buddhism and Shinto are numbered among the fairy tales, while as religious legends they are believed by adults, and thus the legend of Amaterasu, on p. 12, is accepted as historic truth. If any cause produced a general scepticism as to the authenticity of the fairy tales which cluster round Kwannon, Inari, and Jizo (alluded to on p. 21), half the shrines in Japan would be emptied. This book, small as it is, serves to show something of that curious commingling of myth, legend, and fairy lore which forms on the whole the popular religion of Japan, the only religion to which, from its poetry and gaiety, and from bringing them into contact with the deified mythical heroes of their race, the masses are in any way attached.

Hence, as closely connected with the national cult, and as forming part of the much-cherished national life and history, fairy lore in Japan takes a position not belonging to it in any Christian country.

One of the prettiest of the stories in this book is that

of the 'Magic Mirror.' It has a sweetness and simplicity peculiarly Japanese, and the picture of domestic happiness with which it closes can have nothing but a good influence. The quiet story of O Nami San prefixed to the tales, gives an interesting glimpse of Japanese girlhood among the poor, Japan being the only Oriental country in which what we know as girlhood has any existence.

The illustrations taken from Japanese sources are characteristic, and show the style of picture which is the joy of young and old.

I have much pleasure in commending these charming tales to all who desire a glimpse into Japanese fairy lore.

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PART I

FOR MY GROWN-UP READERS

THE very name of Japan has a fascination for English people. It is suggestive of all kinds of delightful things—silks and fans, china and cherry blossom, along with quaint children and paper houses.

But how few people in England really know anything about the life of the Japanese or their literature! For those who cannot go and see a people in their own country, the only way to know them is to read their books—the books written by themselves for themselves. And in the hope of making my readers acquainted with the real Japanese people, I offer them, as the result of four years spent in that country, this translation of Japanese fairy stories. These are the stories that Japanese children are brought up upon—the stories that little Miss 'Waterfall' or 'Stork' are as familiar with as English children are with Jack the Giant-killer or Cinderella.

In order to understand the people of another country you must know something about their literature, and in

order to understand the literature one must know a little about the history and religion of the nation.

The history of Japan commences with the Emperor Jimmu Tenno,[1] B.C. 660. But there are many tales of the mythical gods before him, who created and then inhabited Japan. It is worthy of notice that in these tales it is stated that when heaven and earth began, three deities *were already* in existence; showing that in Japan, as in Egypt and other countries, there has always been a tradition of a Triune God.

Among the mythical deities of Japan, the Sun Goddess is the most venerated. In the street of a Japanese town, when you hear a beating of drums and playing of flutes, you may know that there is a *kagura* going on. In front of some temple a small wooden platform has been erected, on which several men, wearing extraordinary masks and strange garments, are acting a play, which is being watched with great interest by the crowd. 'It is a *kagura*,' they will tell you, and the *kagura* is a kind of dramatic performance which dates from the time when the Sun Goddess, having quarrelled with her brother, hid in a cave, and was only tempted out by the performance of a *kagura*.

The Sun Goddess comes perpetually into Japanese history and art, and also into music. When the court musicians give a performance of their strange and, to English ears, dreary music, if you ask what all that

[1] The tradition is that he was the son of the Lucky Hunter and the daughter of the Dragon King. See the story, 'The Lucky Hunter and the Skilful Fisher.'

wailing is about, you will probably hear that it is very ancient music, and is descriptive of what was performed to tempt the Sun Goddess out of her cave.[1]

Three events of very great importance in the history of Japan are—

1. The introduction of Buddhism.
2. The introduction of Christianity.
3. The commencement of the 'Period of Enlightened Peace,' as the reign of the present emperor is called.

It was in the sixth century A.D. that Buddhism was brought to Japan from Korea, and at the same time there came Chinese literature and civilization, which took a firm hold of the Japanese mind. The speech and writing of the educated classes became Chinese, and from that time the Japanese language was left to the common people.

In order to read a book written in Japanese, you must go back to the tenth century—to such a writer as the famous court lady, Murasaki Shikibu.

'I am tired of the novels of the present time,' said a court lady to the empress.

'You must write us a new one,' said the empress, turning to Murasaki, another of her attendants, who forthwith retired from the court to obey the command.

You may often see her in pictures and on fans—a lady seated at a low table, holding a pen in her hand, and gazing across the waters of a lake. At a time when English women were unable to sign their own

[1] See the story, 'The Sword of the Assembled Clouds of Heaven.'

names, she wrote a work which won for her such lasting fame that she may be called the Shakespeare of Japan. The Japanese look back with regret to the cluster of brilliant women-writers who lived about that time; for the deadening effect of Buddhism was creeping over the country, and it took from the Japanese women both their freedom and their culture, and it will only be with a struggle that they will regain the position they held in olden times.

In 552 A.D. the first Buddhist books were brought into Japan. Just a thousand years afterwards, Francis Xavier landed, and the gospel of Christ was preached. As in other countries, he here met with opposition in many places, but with great encouragement in others. The visitor to Japan who lands at Nagasaki and sees its temples and shrines, finds it difficult to believe that in 1567 there 'was hardly a person who was not a Christian.' Nobunaga, one of the greatest men Japan has had, favoured Christianity, and it seemed as if the whole country would become Christian.

The work commenced by Xavier was carried on by priests who came chiefly from Spain and Portugal. But the successors of Nobunaga did not at all share his views, and, sad to say, Christianity became entangled with political questions, and a rumour arose that the missionaries were merely the heralds of a foreign invasion. The words of a Portuguese sea captain first aroused suspicion.[1] 'The king, my master, begins by sending priests, who win over the people; and when this is done he despatches his troops

[1] *Things Japanese*, by Professor Chamberlain

to join the native Christians, and the conquest is easy and complete.' This unfounded statement was repeated, and had terrible consequences; it raised a persecution which only ended with the siege of Shimobara, where forty thousand were killed, and the professors of Christianity were rooted out of the country.

It is only fair to the Japanese to remember that in so doing they thought they were defending their country against traitors who were in league with a foreign foe. But the accounts of the treatment of the Christians are very terrible. 'We read of Christians being executed in a barbarous manner in sight of each other, of being hurled from the tops of precipices, of being buried alive, of being torn asunder by oxen, of being tied up in rice bags, which were heaped up together, and of the pile thus formed being set on fire. Others were tortured before death by the insertion of sharp spikes under the nails of their hands and feet, while some poor wretches, by a refinement of horrid cruelty, were shut up in cages, and there left to starve with food before their eyes. Let it not be supposed that we have drawn on the Jesuit accounts solely for this information. An examination of the Japanese records will show that the case is not overstated.'[1]

These terrible persecutions were suffered by men, women, and quite young girls, and they had only to recant to be at once set free. The constancy of the Christians is the more remarkable when we think how little knowledge they had. They could not derive strength and support for their faith from the Bible, for they had no written

[1] Mr. Gubbins, in the *Asiatic Soc. Trans.*

gospel whatever. And yet they suffered with a heroism that has never been surpassed, even by the martyrs of Rome.

After the siege of Shimobara very strict laws were enforced. Christianity was forbidden—'even to speak by mistake of these matters invites punishment;' commerce was forbidden; no foreigner was allowed to land in Japan; it was forbidden to build large ships, in case the Japanese should be tempted to go in them to a foreign country. Japan remained shut up and in a state of stagnation for upwards of two hundred years. It was a highly civilized country, with an intelligent people, there was peace in the land, and yet during that time no invention was made, no progress in science. Schools were opened and education provided, but it consisted only in the close study of Chinese learning. And so the nation slumbered for more than two hundred years, until the guns of American ships, under Commodore Perry, forced the unwilling Japanese to see that they were part of one great human family, and that they could not refuse to know the other nations of the world.

Treaties and negotiations of various sorts were begun by the commodore, the land went through great throes in the abolition of the feudal system and other changes which led up to the great date of Japanese history, the year of our Lord 1868, which is called in Japan the year one of the Period of Enlightened Peace.

During this period the emperor has taken the power entirely into his own hands; a representative Government has been formed, the army and navy have been modelled

on European systems; Shintoism has been fixed as the State religion, but religious toleration has been proclaimed.

The unnatural quickness with which these changes have been made has created many anomalies, and the country is torn by two parties, one consisting of those who wish as quickly as possible to abolish the Chinese influence and adopt European ideas; the other, of those who cling to the customs handed down by generations of ancestors, and receive everything European with suspicion.

But it is by the religions of a country that the mind of the people is known. What, then, is Shintoism, the State religion? It is the original religion of Japan, existing in the country long before Buddhism. It may be defined as the worship of a man's own ancestors and the ancestors of the emperor. It acknowledges no one Supreme Being. There are no idols in a Shinto temple. In the centre is a mirror and a stick with pieces of cut paper attached to it. Both are symbolical.

But though in a Shinto temple there is, properly speaking, no god worshipped, yet, in the same way that the ancient Romans had endless gods—Neptune, Mars, and others—so the Shinto religion has created gods and goddesses of the ocean, of mountains and of rivers. Chief among the Shinto deities is the Sun Goddess, who is known in Japan as Amaterasu, and her shrine at Isé is thronged by worshippers.

The Shinto religion teaches nothing. 'With moral teaching, Shinto does not concern itself,' says a well-known writer. And so in calling Shintoism a *religion* an incorrect word is used, for that cannot be called a religion

which does not tell of a Creator, and which gives man no guidance as to his duty in life.

This worship of 'deified ghosts,' as it has been called, was found unsatisfying by the Japanese, for the Buddhist teachers who came in the sixth century were welcomed, and gradually the whole nation, even the Mikado, adopted Buddhism. But they did not reject Shintoism, they kept both, and the religion of Japan became a mixture of Buddhism and Shintoism.

What is Buddhism? In order to understand anything about Japan, you must know a little about Buddhism. To explain it, we must divide Buddhism into two parts: first, the Buddhism of the scholars; second, that of the people, for in Japan these are very different. It is not necessary to go into the details of the life of Gautama, the great founder of Buddhism. He was born in the sixth century B.C. Though son of a king, and happily married, he found no pleasure in life. 'Nothing is stable on earth,' he used to say. 'Nothing is real. Life is like the spark produced by the friction of wood. It is lighted and extinguished; we know not whence it came or whither it goes. It is like the sound of a lyre; and the wise man asks in vain from whence it comes and whither it goes. There must be some supreme intelligence where we could find rest.'[1] Men at all times and in all countries have realized that it is only in knowing the 'supreme intelligence' that we can find *rest*. 'Our souls were formed for Thee, and cannot rest until they find Thee,' said Augustine. 'I will give you rest,' was the promise of our Lord.

[1] *Buddhism*, by Max Müller.

Gautama was carefully kept from the sight of all suffering, and there is a celebrated story of how, when he saw for the first time a decrepit old man, he turned away from his amusements, exclaiming, 'What have I, the future prey of old age—what have I to do with pleasure?' He soon afterwards fled from the court, and from that time he lived a life of great self-denial, and being ever wrapped in contemplation, he became the 'enlightened one;' and on his teaching is based the religion which is professed to-day by many millions of human beings.

There is no more pathetic figure in history than Gautama's, and there is nothing sadder than the religion he bequeathed. Everything is worthless. Man must try to extinguish all desires, and life itself is the root of all sorrows. According to Buddhist teaching, man is being perpetually born again into this world. If he has committed evil deeds in one life, he may be punished in the next, and his soul may even enter a beast. There are six worlds or conditions into which he may be born—

1. The world of hell.
2. The world of hungry devils.
3. The world of beasts.
4. The world of disembodied spirits.
5. The world of man.
6. The world of heaven.[1]

But to attain the abstract perfection that is the supposed aim of the Buddhist seems impossible, for though those who can 'apprehend the Ten Abstract Truths' may get to it after four births, yet the inferior intelligence can only

[1] Rev. A. Lloyd, *Asiatic Soc. Trans.*

arrive at that condition after a hundred kalpas, or periods of time transcending calculation.[1]

It makes one's head reel to think of the studies that the scholar goes through in his struggles to attain perfection; they are truly beyond an 'inferior intelligence.' Here are a few sentences from the dying speech of a great teacher—

'The commandments of the aforesaid apparent doctrine are—the Three Refuges, the Eight Precepts, the Five Precepts, and the Commandments of the Shomon and the Bosatsu. Each of these four classes has its own special commandment.

'What are called the Juzen are three commandments concerning the body, four concerning the mouth, and three concerning the heart.

'If you reverse the order, and from the end return to the beginning, you will find that the elemental principle is the one heart. There is no difference between my heart, the heart of all sentient beings, and the heart of Buddha.

'Knowing these commandments, keep them as a treasure. If, therefore, you break them you are not the disciple of Buddha. Such a man is not my disciple either; nor am I his teacher. He does not differ from a piece of mud or a broken tree.'

The majority of the Japanese people are Buddhists, but Buddhism is not a religion that can touch the masses. If you take a tour through the country, turning aside from the beaten track, living in tea-houses, dispensing with furniture, content to have neither bread nor meat, you will come across all kinds of images and shrines, and will

[1] Sir E. Satow.

gradually understand the popular beliefs. Here under the shadow of high cryptomerias is a shrine to the Goddess of Mercy, the Thousand-handed Kwannon; but you will observe that she has only forty hands, it being impossible to put a thousand on one figure.

That stone slab by the dusty road represents a triad of monkeys, one with his hand to his ears, another with a hand to his eyes, and the third with his to his mouth, for they will neither see, hear, nor listen to evil.

The little red shrine that makes such a vivid spot of colour in the darkness of the wood is a shrine to the Fox God, Inari by name. Originally the fox was only the messenger of Inari, but now the common people consider Inari and the fox to be the same.

The rice fields, which cover the country with a lush green, are under his protection. And if not duly honoured the fox has the terrible power of entering the human body and bewitching people.[1]

As you get to the top of some mountain pass and are able to look across a plain, probably broken by curiously abrupt mountains and sudden rocks, you find a stone figure, and are told that this is the Pass of Jizo, the patron of travellers.

Though there are but few images of the founder of Buddhism in Japan, woods and streets and country roads abound with that of Jizo, for he is not only the patron of travellers, but also of children.

In the spirit world there is a hideous old hag, who robs children of their clothes, and puts them to the endless task

[1] See the story, 'Kachi Kachi Mountain.'

of piling up stones on the banks of a river. But from this hag Jizo has the power to deliver them, and so those that love the children pray to him.

These are two or three of the gods of popular Buddhism whose shrines fill the country. And with the belief in them are numberless curious ideas about the spirit world.

You may want to make an addition to your house, and in doing so propose to open a door outwards. If the door would face in a north-easterly direction, your landlord will rather eject you and lose a good tenant than allow you to do so; for that is the direction by which all kinds of evil spirits and misfortunes enter the house.

'If you go away,' he says, 'no one will take the house with such a door, and if, while you are in it, you have illness or any misfortune, people will blame me for allowing a "Kimon," as it is called.'

Look at this party of little girls chattering away over their beloved paper dolls. You will see that the paper has been cleverly manipulated by those little fingers, and the dolls are dressed in scraps of cotton or silk. But if you look at one of the treasures you will see that she has no face—just a piece of blank paper. Perhaps you suggest painting a mouth and eyes, but you will be met with little screams and cries of 'No! no! If we paint a face she will become a ghost, and haunt us at night.'

And though you may become acquainted with many paper dolls, you will never find a lady with a face among them.

And when you are quite in the country, if you take a

stroll along to the river, perhaps some morning in spring, when the banks by the roadside are covered with violets, and the cherry trees are hanging down their pink tassels, as you approach you will hear the shouting of a party of children who are splashing their brown and naked little bodies in the water. But notice that arrangement of sticks by the bank. It is like what gipsies put up from which to hang their kettles; but here, in place of a kettle, there is a white cloth suspended. By the side lies a rough wooden dipper, and perhaps a branch of cherry blossom is stuck in as ornament. That is the 'flowing invocation,' for the cloth is suspended over flowing water. A woman has died at the birth of a child, and her spirit must wander until the cloth is worn through by the water that is poured over it. Each passer-by is expected to fill the dipper and empty it over the cloth.

And as you realize a country where shrines and images are to be found at every turn, in the woods, in the streets, and by the seashore, you naturally come to the conclusion that the Japanese are earnest in their beliefs. But, strange to say, you are quite wrong. Go into this little house, and when you have drunk the inevitable tea and had a little talk, ask the old woman whether she worships Buddhist or Shinto deities. She will probably shake her head and say, laughing—

'Oh, as for me, I worship nothing!'

'Do you never worship anything?'

'Oh, I am only an old woman; I know nothing about it.'

Or ask these country boys who come and sit down

beside you on the roadside, and seem extremely desirous to have the honour of talking with a European. They, too, will tell you that they know nothing about their gods, and may add that they look upon them as *bakarashii koto*, 'just nonsense.'

Both Buddhism and Shintoism teach the immortality of the soul, yet in the newspapers you may see such statements as that made recently by a school superintendent.[1] He took one hundred and eighteen children about thirteen years old, and asked them if the soul lived after death. Eighty-one believed that 'death ends all,' twelve could not answer, twenty-five thought that the soul did live after death.

And now you see what a difficult task the Christian missionary has before him. To the Buddhist philosopher, with his elaborate systems, he says, 'You must become as a child.' To the Shintoist he says, 'You must worship the Creator, not the created spirit.' To the people, with their shadowy belief in myriads of gods, he says, 'There is one God and Father of all.'

And to all he has to strive to bring home the sense of sin, and their need of a Saviour. And here we touch upon the greatest blemish in the Japanese character, and the gravest obstacle to the advance of Christianity. Many writers have charged the Japanese with a shallowness of character, a want of personality. But this is the result of their religion.

'Belief in the personality of man and belief in the personality of God stand or fall together. Where faith in

[1] In the *Shukyo*.

the personality of God is wanting, the perception which men have of their own personality is found to be in an equal degree indistinct.'[1] The greatest difficulty for the Christian missionary is to arouse 'the human sense of guilt, that awful guardian of our personal identity.'

For the Japanese have long been taught that 'Morals were invented by the Chinese because they were an immoral people; but in Japan there was no necessity for any system of morals, as every Japanese acted rightly, if he only consulted his own heart.'

And where there is no sense of sin there is no desire for holiness, and a Saviour who has come to deliver them from the bondage of sin, and to impart that holiness 'without which no man can see God,' is a perfectly new and strange idea. Nor can they easily grasp the idea that sin itself is such a hideous thing that God should Himself die on the cross to release us from it.

The Buddhist philosopher teaches that life is to be despised, and that it is a sin to take pleasure in anything, for everything is a delusion. Our Lord taught that the meanest human life is of value, and we are told that 'the works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have *pleasure* therein,' and that the duty of believers is to 'rejoice evermore.'

Yes, indeed; the conversion of the Japanese to Christ will only be effected by much patient teaching; and how few there are to give it! When a great wave rushed in on the east coast and carried away 40,000 human beings in a few moments, how many Christian teachers were there

[1] Fisher, *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief.*

among them? One itinerating Roman Catholic priest was the only one on that long sea-line.

In spite of the fact that the coming of Christianity into Japan has roused a certain activity among the Buddhist priests, the mass of the people know little of, and care nothing for their religion.

'No God, no faith, no hope!'

And now, if this brief sketch has in any measure brought before my reader's mind's eye the people of Japan, they will agree with the words of a learned professor who spent much time in the study of various faiths—

'Many are the advantages to be derived from a careful study of other religions, but the greatest of all is that it teaches us to appreciate more truly what we possess in our own. When do we feel the blessings of our own country more than when we return from abroad?

'It is the same with regard to religion. Let us see what other nations have had and still have in the place of religion; let us examine the prayers, the worship, the theology, even of the most civilized races, and we shall then understand more thoroughly what blessings are vouchsafed to us in being allowed to breathe from the first breath of life the pure air of a land of Christian light and knowledge. We are too apt to take the greatest blessings as matters of course, and even religion forms no exception.'

[*See page* 101.

PART II

ABOUT THOSE WHO READ THE FAIRY TALES

A True Story for my Child-readers

PERHAPS some of the children who read these stories will say that they want to know something about the Japanese who live *now;* the stories are all about 'long, long ago' people. Well, I will tell you a little about some of the people who are living *now.*

You English children live in brick and stone houses; Japanese children live in houses made of wood, bamboo, and paper. You go to school with leather boots on; they patter along to school either in straw sandals or wooden clogs. You eat your dinner of beef and potatoes with a knife and fork; they eat their rice and fish, bits of sea-weed, and ginger and vegetables with a pair of chopsticks. And so you might think that Japanese children are quite, quite different to you. But it is only because you don't know them; if you did, you would find out that they are very like yourselves.

We English people often say that the Japanese are all 'as like as two peas.' The Japanese say that English people have all got just the same face, 'as like as the two

sides of a lemon,' they say. And they very often find it difficult to tell which is a man and which is a woman.

Often as I pass through villages I hear the discussion going, 'Is it a man foreigner, or is it a woman foreigner?'

Not that I would look at all like a man to your eyes, but in this country, where the women always go bare-headed, though the men often wear hats, the very fact of seeing something on my head makes them think that I am a man.

If you could live in Japan, and get accustomed to the language, and listen to the children talking to each other, the feeling that the Japanese are as 'like as two peas' would soon pass away. In my Sunday school I find the same naughty little boy who will poke his neighbour and look about, instead of attending to his lesson; only whereas in England I spoke to him as 'Tom' or 'Dick,' in Japan I call him 'Mr. Sato,' or 'Mr. Yamada,' because Japan is a very polite country, and one must not forget to say 'Mr.,' even to children.

And in my Japanese Sunday school there is also the smart boy who learns his verse and always wants to say it first; and the girl who, as 'Emily' or 'Sarah' in England, is fond of finery, and likes to spend her money on feathers or ribbon bows, appears in Japan as Miss Stork, or Miss Waterfall, and wears wonderful hairpins ornamenting her hair, and a big sash round her waist.

Yes, you will meet good children, naughty ones, clever ones, stupid ones, in Japan just as in England; and I would like to tell you about one girl I know, because I think that I might call her the good 'story-book' kind of

a girl. You don't meet that kind of girl often in England, do you? Nor do you in Japan; but I would like you to know that there *is* that kind of girl in Japan, and so I will tell you about her.

Not far from the slopes of the snowy Fuji lies a small town whose inhabitants boast that their town contains not a single empty house, nor a person who need be a moment idle if they wish to work. They are chiefly engaged in the cultivation of tobacco and silk-worms. During June and July the women hardly have a moment's rest; every house has its trays of silk-worms, which have to be fed with fresh leaves six times every day. The Japanese beliefs have very little hold in the place, but nine years ago there was not one Christian in the town. But the headman, hearing the preaching of a Japanese clergyman, became convinced of the truth of Christianity, and such was the influence of his life that there is now quite a band of earnest Christians.

It soon became their great desire to have a church, and in 1895 a room was consecrated as a preaching place by the bishop. The opening service was quaint. The bishop sat on a chair, lent by the only person who possessed one —the dentist. The rest of us sat on the floor. The singing took many ups and downs which it was impossible to follow, and occasionally it was very terribly out of tune, but the pleasure of the congregation in the completion of a building whose every nail had been a subject of interest was really touching.

It came to be my duty to go once a month to try to help on the work among the women. One Sunday evening

I noticed kneeling beside me a little slip of a girl who looked about thirteen.

'Who is she?' I asked O Miyo San, one of my Christian girls.

'She is a friend of mine, who wishes to know about God.'

'You must bring her to see me next time I come,' said I.

On my next visit I had only just arrived, and was unpacking, and scattering over the floor (for there are no chests-of-drawers) my clothes, bread, cold meat, Bible pictures, butter, Japanese tracts, magic-lantern slides, and a collection of other things, all wanted, and none of them to be had for love or money in the place, when there came a 'We beg your honourable pardon,' and the two girls appeared.

O Nami San was shy at first, but gradually unfolded. 'Yes, she had a father, but he was very delicate, and, to tell the truth, he did woman's work; he did the daily rice and the *hibachi* (fire-box), while she and her mother were strong and could work, so they kept the household by making tobacco-boxes.'

I talked to the child and showed her some pictures, and when they were making their bows before going, I asked her if she would come and see me next day. She looked in an embarrassed way at O Miyo San, who began to explain.

'To-morrow is Saturday, and if she does not do Sunday evening's work on Saturday, she cannot go to church on Sunday; she will be working till eleven o'clock at night to-morrow.'

I really was astonished. It meant something, when you have to be up at five o'clock in the morning, to stay up till eleven o'clock, especially for a girl of thirteen.

After this first introduction, O Nami San never failed to come and see me on my visits, and she always appeared at the Sunday evening service. We had a good many talks, and I found that her ideas on many subjects were peculiar.

'O Nami San,' I said, when reading of the Bethlehem shepherds, 'you see, shepherds are men who take care of sheep and feed them. I suppose you have never seen a sheep?'

'Oh yes, I have,' she said. 'When there was the festival in honour of the Fox God there was a fair, and two sheep were brought to it. I saw them, and they fed on paper.'

'Oh no,' I said—'at least, these shepherds did not feed their sheep on paper; they fed them upon grass.'

The sheep she saw ate paper and liked it 'awfully,' she declared.

Japanese paper is a peculiar soft material, and I can imagine sheep eating it, but I cannot imagine what kind of mutton would develop out of paper-fed sheep.

When spring came, O Nami San appeared one day, bowing at my door, bearing a large medicine-bottle, with a lily stuck in it.

'I was saying to O Miyo San, "What are we to do for the Teacher?"' (This is a very respectful term, like the Jewish 'Rabbi'). '"We cannot spread a feast before her; what can we do?" And O Miyo San said, "She is very fond of flowers;" so I have ventured to plant a few poor

flowers in front of your honourable house, and as you say you don't like getting up early in the morning, I have planted them so that they will flower about nine o'clock in the morning.'

The Japanese have a wonderful way of timing the flowering of some of their flowers. But some flower at a terribly early hour. The morning glory, for instance, is at its best about four or five in the morning, and it is quite a matter of sorrow to some of my friends that I won't get up at four o'clock to gaze at morning glories; but my unromantic English soul does not rise to any enthusiasm at that hour.

And now whenever I arrive on my monthly visit, the medicine-bottle is handed in at the door, with a flower or some bright-coloured leaves, always arranged with that taste which the commonest people among the Japanese invariably show in their handling of flowers.

It was now some little time since O Nami San began to receive Christian teaching. As her parents were not Christians, it would not have been wise to baptize her too soon, but I thought that I would speak to her about baptism.

'O Nami San, you have seen people receive holy baptism in this church. Do you wish to be baptized?'

'I am always praying,' she said in a plaintive voice, 'that I may receive baptism and be taught the Way quickly. I think if I was baptized I should have such a comfortable feeling in my heart. But O Miyo San says that I cannot be baptized yet, because my faith is so thin.'

'And why does she think your faith thin?' I asked, and I could not help smiling.

It was after I had known O Nami San a couple of months that I first made the acquaintance of her father. One evening, 'I beg your honourable pardon,' was heard at my door.

'Condescend to enter,' I call, and an elderly man, with large dark eyes and a rather mournful countenance, entered with all due Japanese politeness.

'The Teacher has condescended to arrive'—bow. 'Our spirits are poisoned to think that you should have to travel in this terrible rain'—bow number two. 'I am O Nami San's father. Please to continue your kindness to my unworthy daughter'—and bow number three completes the number required by Japanese etiquette.

We have a little conversation, and then he says in an embarrassed way, 'I have a favour to ask of the Teacher.'

'He can't want to learn English, can he?' I thought, for that is the usual favour that the young students come to beg.

'Please to deign to look at this;' and he drew out of his long hanging sleeve a piece of steel, cut in a long narrow strip, with a notched edge like a clock-wheel.

'There is one thing in the world that I long to have,' he said, 'and it is not to be had in Japan, but in England I am told it is to be had. This is steel cut for a clock-wheel, but I want a longer piece. Now, in Japan no clock is made that requires a bigger wheel than this, but in England I am told there are great big clocks. I have

invented a machine for cutting paper; every one says that it is just what is needed, but it must be bigger, and so the wheel must be bigger. And in England they say there are big clock-wheels, if only the Teacher could tell me where I could get a big wheel.'

'Would it not cost a good deal?' I said, thinking that poor little O Nami San would have to make a great many tobacco-boxes to pay for her father's wheel.

'I have thought of that machine for years,' he said; 'and the neighbours know about it, and they would lend me money.'

I felt very doubtful as to what I ought to say. The great army of disappointed inventors of Europe rose to my mind. Ought I to encourage him?

'I would wait for years,' he continued pleadingly, 'if only I could get it.'

He went on to explain about the invention.

'You must excuse my clumsy Japanese,' I say, 'and that I do not understand all you tell me. But I will come to-morrow to see your machine, and then I shall understand better.'

Next day I went to his house, and I saw at a glance the cause of O Nami San's round shoulders. Her work consisted of sitting in front of a low table, on which she placed a sheet of cardboard, then with a few twists she shaped this into a tobacco-box, and then tossed it from her into a huge basket, as high as a man, which stood in front of her. It looked easy enough; but how awful it must be, I thought, to sit there day after day, working at that unutterably uninteresting cardboard! Her mother

and younger sister sat by her, engaged on the same work. Nine thousand boxes, they told me, they could send out on a busy day, but they had then to start work before daylight.

'And how does O Nami San get time to read her Bible as she does?' I asked.

'Oh, we don't do nine thousand every day; some days the manufactory only want a couple of thousand, and then she reads her Bible.'

O Nami San's father came in, and after the usual exchange of bows we went on to the burning subject, as I found it to be, of his invention.

'Oh yes,' said his wife, 'he is always wandering about doing nothing, thinking of his invention. You know quite well who does the work of the house. It is all very well to say that the people cut paper by hand, and your invention will cut it in half the time; but I say that you had much better come and make tobacco-boxes too.'

She said it in a laughing, scornful kind of way, while the man looked at her deprecatingly with his sad eyes.

'If the Teacher would only tell him the name of a shop,' he said; but I knew it meant more than that. It meant translating his letter for him, for what English clockmaker would understand all the wiggles and waggles of his Japanese writing? And it meant also that he would live for months dreaming of that big clock-wheel. Once give my advice, and he would consider the whole thing accomplished, for the faith these country people have in a 'Teacher' is unlimited.

'I know nothing about the clock-shops in England,' I tell him. 'You must ask some clockmaker in Tokyo when he next sends an order to England to order one bigger strip of steel for you. There are plenty of orders constantly sent to England.'

His face grew sadder and sadder, and I could see that I had been his last hope.

It is some months since we had that interview, and I have seen him several times since, and whenever we meet I have a kind of guilty feeling. I know, but for several reasons cannot tell him, that next year I return to England.

When the time comes, shall I offer to try and get him the steel, or would it be silly to encourage him in his inventions? Is poor O Nami San's back to grow rounder and rounder over her thousands of tobacco-boxes, while he merely dreams of inventions? Why should he not do the dull work too? But then, would it not be very unkind to let the poor man go disappointed through life, longing for something that I could bring him? I think that I must help him.

Of course, if this were one of my fairy tales, you would hear that he got his wheel; that his invention was a great success; that O Nami San never made any more tobacco-boxes, and they 'all lived happily ever after.'

But, as I told you before, this is a real life story, and not a make-up; and the piece of steel which O Nami San's father gave me as a pattern of what he wanted is still in my box, and she still sits tossing her boxes into the big basket.

Do I mean her always to go on at her hard work? Certainly not, especially as I know children in England who would love to act like the kind fairy who comes in the stories and makes people happy.

What do you suppose the money is for that you put in missionary boxes? Do you just drop it in, and then never think any more about it? Sometimes the money goes to help to build churches and rooms for meetings, like the one in the village I have been telling you about; sometimes it is needed for sending teachers to those villages, because, you see, they need some one to explain the Bible to them; and some of it is spent on schools. I mean O Nami San to go to one of these schools, where she will not have to get up in the dark and work all day, but will be taught and helped in every way, so that I hope her faith will not be 'thin' any more, but will grow strong and be a help to others.

I wish that I could tell you more about the Japanese; but it would make this book too long. They are kind, nice people, who are very friendly to us English, so we really ought to give them what we consider our greatest possession—our Bible.

Forty years ago there was not a single Christian in Japan, now there are nearly a hundred thousand. It sounds a lot; but then there are *millions* of people.

Instead of *my* telling you about them, I want you to read some of their own stories. If you asked a Japanese boy to tell you a story, he would say politely, 'Will you condescend to listen to the story of Momotaro, or the story of the dog Shiro?'

Unfortunately, it is a very long way from England to Japan, and I dare say you have never met a Japanese boy, and so I have taken some of the Japanese children's books and put them into English for you. Here they are, with their pictures. Pray 'condescend' to read them!

PART III

THE FAIRY TALES

I

MOMOTARO; OR, THE PEACH-BOY

IT was the beginning of summer. The ground was covered with a sheet of soft green, and the willows on the banks of the river were shaking out their tassels. Every now and then a soft breeze ruffled the surface of the water. The green all round and the summer air gave a delicious feeling that cannot be put into words.

On the bank of the river an O baa San[1] sat washing clothes. She had chosen a good place for her basket, and taking the clothes one by one, was washing them in water so clear that you could see the stones at the bottom and the crazy dartings of the little minnows as plainly as if they had been in your hands. Suddenly there came rolling down with the stream the most enormous, round, soft-looking peach.

'Well,' said the O baa San, 'I am sixty years, but never

[1] The terms 'O jii San' and 'O baa San' mean 'honourable old man' and 'honourable old woman,' and are always used when speaking of old people. The word 'jii' is pronounced as in '*Gee* up, horse!' and 'baa,' the same as in 'Baa, baa, black sheep.'

have I seen such a wonderful-looking peach. It must be delicious to eat.' She looked round for a stick to reach it with, but there was none. She was perplexed for a moment, then, clapping her hands and nodding her head, she sang the words—

'Far waters are bitter, near waters are sweet—
Leave the bitter, come to the sweet.'

These words she sang three times, when, strange to say, the peach rolled over till it was just in front of her.

'How delighted the old man will be!' she thought as she picked it up. She then packed up her clothes and hurried home. When she saw the O jii San returning from the mountains, where he had been cutting grass, she ran out to meet him, and showed him the peach.

'Dear me,' said the O jii San, 'it is wonderful. Where did you buy it?'

'Buy it? I did not buy it.' And then the O baa San told the story.

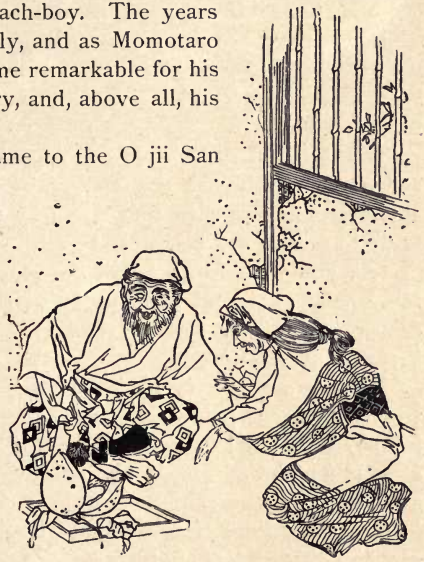
'I feel hungry,' said the O jii San; 'let us have a feast at once.'

So they got out a board to cut it on, and a knife; but just as the O jii San was going to cut it he heard a clear child's voice, which said, 'O jii San, wait!' and at that moment the peach fell in two, and out there danced a little boy. Was not this a strange thing? The O jii San and O baa San thought so, and they were nearly fainting with surprise when the boy said—

'Do not be afraid of me. You have often lamented that you have no child, and the gods, being touched with pity, have sent me down to be your child.'

Was this not delightful for the old couple? They did not know how to express their gratitude for this unexpected favour.

As he had come to them in a peach they called the child Momotaro, or Peach-boy. The years passed very quickly, and as Momotaro grew up he became remarkable for his beauty, his bravery, and, above all, his great strength.



One day he came to the O jii San and said—

'Father, for many years your kindness has been higher than the mountains on which you cut the grass, and deeper than the river where the O baa San washes her clothes. How can I thank you?'

'Do not thank us,' said the O jii San; 'it will pain us if you do so; besides which, when we grow old we shall be dependent on you, so you will not be indebted to us.'

'While I am still so much indebted to you I do not like to leave you,' said Momotaro, 'but still I have a request to make: please give me leave to go away for a short time.'

'Go away! where to?'

'From the earliest ages,' said Momotaro, 'in the north of Japan, separated from the mainland by the sea, is an island which is inhabited by demons. These demons do not obey the gods of Japan, but follow their own wicked devices. They are rascals who steal both people and treasure, but I mean to crush them with one blow, and to bring back all their stolen riches. For this purpose I wish to leave you.'

The O jii San was at first speechless with astonishment, but as he considered the matter he remembered that Momotaro, having been sent down by the gods, was not likely to receive any injury, so he said—

'As you wish to go I will not stop you. Indeed, as these demons are the enemies of Japan, the sooner you destroy them and restore peace to your country the better.'

Momotaro was very glad that the O jii San had so willingly given permission, and preparations for his journey were begun at once. The O baa San got out her stored-up millet and made him some dumplings, and then got his clothes ready.

When the time came for him to start the old couple saw him off with tears in their eyes.

'Take care of yourself. May you return victorious,' they said.

'And you, also, please to take care of yourselves,' said Momotaro.

He pressed on as quickly as he could on his journey, till when it was midday he sat down to eat his dinner. He

had just taken out one of the dumplings, when suddenly beside him there appeared a dog, who, showing his teeth, began to bark. 'Wan! Wan!' barked the dog, 'you have come into my territory without leave, so if you do not at once give me your dinner I will devour you.'

Momotaro smiled scornfully. 'You desert dog,' he said, 'I am going forth to fight the enemies of Japan, and if you come in my way I will slay you.'

'I did not know it was Momotaro,' said the dog, cowering down and putting his tail between his legs. 'I humbly beg your honourable pardon for my rude conduct. Please allow me to accompany you to fight the enemies of our country.'

'I have no objection to your coming,' said Momotaro.

'Nothing would give me so much pleasure,' said the dog. 'But I am very hungry. Will you please give me something to eat?'

'Here is a dumpling for you,' said Momotaro.

When the dog had eaten the dumpling they hurried on. They had crossed many mountains and valleys, when suddenly, as they were hurrying along, an animal sprang down from a tree, and bowing down in front of Momotaro, said—

'Is this not the great Momotaro going to make war against the enemies of Japan? Pray allow me to accompany you.'

The dog came angrily forward. 'You mountain monkey, of what use would you be in the war? I alone accompany the great Momotaro.'

Now, the dog and the monkey never can be friends, and, of course, this speech made the monkey very angry.

'You think a great deal of yourself,' said the monkey, preparing to fight. He could not draw his sword, for the monkey does not generally carry a sword; but, showing his teeth and sharpening his nails, he approached the dog. Just then Momotaro stepped forward.

'Stop,' said he; 'do not be so hasty, dog. This monkey is not a bad fellow, and I intend to enrol him as one of my vassals.' So saying, he gave the monkey half a dumpling, which the monkey ate, and so became one of Momotaro's retainers. But it was no easy matter to make these two go peacefully along together. So at last Momotaro hit upon the plan of giving his standard to the monkey, and making him walk in front, while he gave his sword to the dog, who walked behind, while Momotaro himself walked in the middle, carrying only his fan.[1]

And so they hurried on their way, when suddenly, as they were entering a wilderness, a wonderful bird sprang from the ground. His body was clothed with a feather robe of the five colours, and his head plumage was of the deepest crimson.

The dog, seeing the bird, thought he would devour him at one mouthful; but Momotaro sprang forward and prevented this.

[1] This would be his *gunsen*, or war-fan. Before the Japanese army was modelled on the European system, an officer's equipment included a fan, partly made of iron, with which he pointed when giving his orders.

'He is a curious bird, and may be of use to us,' he said. 'Bird, do you wish to interrupt my journey? If so, the dog shall bite off your head. But if you submit to me, you may become my vassal.'

The bird, instantly kneeling down in front of Momotaro, said—

'Is this the great Momotaro of whose expedition I have heard a rumour? I

am called the pheasant, and am a humble bird that lives in the wilderness. Pray allow me to accompany you to fight the enemies of Japan.'

The dog stepped forward. 'Does this low fellow go with us?' he said.

'It is no business of yours, dog,' said Momotaro. 'But I will give you three animals warning that, if there is the slightest quarrelling between you, I will send you back that very moment. In war a good position is better than good luck, but union is better than either good luck or good position. However weak the enemy, we cannot be victorious if we do not fight together.'

The three animals listened with the greatest reverence, and promised implicit obedience, and after the pheasant had been enrolled in their ranks by receiving the customary half dumpling, they again hurried on their way.

At last they came to the sea. Not even the smallest island was in sight, nothing to be seen but waves. It looked as if some monster lay at the bottom of the sea, stirring it up.

Now the dog, the monkey, and the pheasant are all creatures that live on dry land, and though the steepest cliff and deepest valley could not frighten them, yet when they saw the rolling up and down of the waves they stood quite speechless.

Momotaro, seeing this, said in a loud voice, '*Now*, my vassals, why do you hesitate? Do you fear the ocean? You cowards! It would have been better to have come alone than to have had such companions; but I will now dismiss you. Return!'

The three animals were much pained at hearing these reproaches, and clinging to Momotaro, besought him not to send them away. As they really seemed to be plucking up courage, he at last consented, and they began to prepare a boat.

There was a favourable wind, and after they set out the receding shore was soon lost to sight in the morning haze. At first the animals were very unhappy, but they gradually became accustomed to the motion, and then they used to stand on deck looking eagerly for the appearance of the island. At last, for want of occupation, each animal began to show off his own particular accomplishment; the dog sat up and begged, the monkey played tricks, and the pheasant, not to be outdone, began to sing a mournful kind of song.

All this was a great amusement to Momotaro, and before he knew it the island was close at hand. They saw a rock carved out as with a chisel, on the top of which was a gate and barrier of iron. The houses were closely crowded together, and their roofs were also of iron. Many flags were flying; indeed, it seemed an impregnable fortress. Momotaro, seeing this, turned to the pheasant, 'Lucky you have wings,' he said. 'Now fly to the island and find out what they are doing—those island demons.'

The pheasant, bowing low, instantly obeyed his orders and flew to the island, where he found the demons all assembled on the roofs of their houses.

'Listen, you island demons,' sang the pheasant. 'The messenger of the great Sun Goddess is coming with an

army to destroy you. If you wish to save your lives, yield at once.'

'You vain pheasant!' laughed the demons. 'We will soon let you feel our weapons.' And so saying, they girded up their garments of tiger-skin and seized their weapons. But the pheasant, who is naturally a very strong bird, swept down, and with one peck took off the head of a red demon.[1] Then began a fierce battle, but very soon the gate burst open, and the dog and the monkey rushed in, raging like lions. The demons, who thought that they had only to do with one bird, were much alarmed, and began to fight furiously. Even the children of the red, black, and blue demons all joined, and the sound of their yells as it mingled with the sound of the waves beating on the shore was truly terrible. But they soon got the worst of it, some falling from the rocks and some being killed by the fierce onslaughts of the dog, the monkey, and the pheasant.

Till at last only the head demon was left; and finally he, throwing away his weapons, broke off his horns, as a sign of submission.

With his hands full of treasures he knelt down before Momotaro in a spider-like fashion, and with tears streaming down his cheeks. 'Great Momotaro,' he said, 'spare my life! From to-day I shall reform; only spare me!'

Momotaro laughed scornfully. 'You coward, only thinking of your life! For many years you have persecuted and killed innocent people, so now you shall receive no pity. We will take you a prisoner to Japan, and there

[1] In Japan there are red, black, and blue demons, according to tradition.

your head will be cut off and stuck on a gate as a warning to all who see it.'

So the monkey, tying a rope round the demon, led him prisoner. They also carried away with them the hoarded treasures of the demons. There was coral, and tortoise, and pearls, not to speak of magic coats and umbrellas, which made the person who used them quite invisible. All these things were put in the boat, and great was the joy of the O jii San and O baa San when they saw Momotaro return victorious.

And they lived happily ever after.

II

THE OLD MAN WHO MADE THE TREES BLOSSOM

LONG, long ago, there lived an old couple who had no child, so to comfort them they bought a dog, whom they called Shiro.

They grew very fond of him, and did everything they could to make him happy: when they had anything nice to eat they always fed him first, and it was their great delight to watch his happy, expectant face.

The Old Man who made the Trees blossom

It is said that a cat in three days forgets the kindness of three years, whereas a dog does not in three years forget the kindness of three days. And this, indeed, was the nature of Shiro, who did all he could to show his gratitude to the O jii San, his master, and the O baa San, his mistress. In the daytime he would go with the O jii San to the mountains to cut wood, and at night he would guard the house.

Now, it so happened that the next-door neighbours were also an old couple. But they hated Shiro, and if he as much as peeped round their gate they would throw a stick or a stone at him, and once they made him quite lame. As he had never done anything to hurt them, this showed that they were people of a very disagreeable nature.

One day the O jii San heard Shiro barking violently in the garden. 'It must be the crows that he is barking at,' thought the O jii San, and he went out to see what was the matter. Shiro, looking very happy, came rushing towards him, and pulling at his coat, dragged him to a corner in the garden, where there was a large tree, under which he had been digging.

'Well, Shiro, what is it, then?' said the O jii San. But Shiro went on digging furiously and barking. The O jii San, thinking that there must be something there, fetched a hoe and began to dig. Soon he saw something shining, and picking it up, found a golden guinea. Thinking this very strange, he went on digging, and soon came upon a perfect pile of guineas, yellow as the mountain gorse. The O jii San, hardly able to walk for astonishment, went

and called the O baa San, and the two carried the money into the house.

So, through the kindness of Shiro, the old couple grew quite rich, and naturally Shiro was petted even more than before.

Now, very shortly after this the next-door neighbour came, and, making a very polite bow, said, 'I am so sorry to trouble you, but would you be so kind as to let me have the loan of Shiro for a little?'

As the neighbour had always been so cross to Shiro, the O jii San thought this very strange; but, being a kind old man, he only said, 'If he can be of any use to you, pray take him.'

Having thus successfully borrowed Shiro, the neighbour returned to his house, and calling his wife, fetched a hoe, and they went to the back garden, where there grew a tree just like the one in the O jii San's garden.

'Now,' said he, 'as there were guineas under the tree in my neighbour's field, there is no reason why they should not be under my tree;' and so saying he pushed Shiro's nose into the earth, pressing it down and hurting him very much. So Shiro began to scrape with his front paws, which delighted the neighbour very much. 'Now stop,' said he, 'and I will dig.' So he took the hoe and began to dig.

'Dear me, the guineas are very deep down this time!' he grumbled, as he went on digging and digging. And then all at once he came upon nasty black mud. Seeing this, the old couple were very angry. 'You are no better than a useless knave, if you can dig up guineas

only in your own house!' said the neighbour, seizing Shiro and beating him with the hoe. Alas, poor Shiro! He struggled violently, but the neighbour in his rage hit him on the head, and he soon fell a lifeless corpse.

The neighbour took up his body, and burying it in the hole, returned to the house, looking as if nothing had happened.

Now, as Shiro did not return, his master and mistress

began to get anxious, and at last the O jii San went to the neighbour and said—

'What has become of our Shiro? If your honourable business is finished, please let him return to us.'

'Is it Shiro you want? I have just killed him.'

'What, killed Shiro!' said the O jii San, thunderstruck. 'Why?'

'Of course I would not kill an innocent creature. Please to listen to what happened. Lately foxes have been coming into our garden, so I borrowed Shiro for a watch-dog, but he did nothing but eat and sleep, and made such a mess of the house and garden that at last I got out of temper and killed him.'

'Oh dear, oh dear!' said Shiro's master, weeping bitterly. 'Poor thing! if I had only known what was happening, I would have saved his life. Whatever his faults were, you have done an unkind thing.' The O jii San wept for some time, while the neighbour went on complaining of Shiro. 'Well,' he said, 'what is done can't be undone. Poor Shiro seems to have behaved badly, and he has reaped the consequences. But please to give me his body.'

'Oh, I can't do that, for I have buried it under the tree.'

'Dear, dear! Have you already buried it? What shall I do? Well, would you mind selling me the wood of the tree?'

'Sell the tree?'

'Yes; as Shiro was buried under it, I should like to have the wood.'

'Oh, well, if that is the case, I don't mind selling it to you.'

And so the O jii San bought the wood and carried it home. He then set to work and made a tub from it for the manufacture of *awa mochi*, which he wished to offer to Shiro's spirit.[1] The old couple both worked hard at the *mochi*.

'Now, Shiro,' they said, 'your spirit should be happy, for we are making your favourite *awa mochi*.'

But a most astonishing thing happened. They only put in a handful of millet, but it kept on increasing and increasing till at last the tub overflowed. The old couple were very much delighted. 'This certainly must be the doing of Shiro,' they thought, and they put the nicest-looking cakes on the shelf; after which they had quite a feast, for the cakes were more delicious than anything they had ever tasted.

Now, the neighbour heard of this. So after a few days he came and said—

'We have been thinking in our house that as Shiro was so fond of *awa mochi*, we would like to make a few cakes and offer them to his spirit, so would you kindly lend us your tub?' And the O jii San lent it, though he thought it very disagreeable of the neighbour, after what had happened, to come borrowing his things.

[1] In Japanese houses you will generally see a shelf against the wall, on which are vases of flowers, cakes, etc. These are offerings to the spirits of deceased members of the family. The O jii San wished to treat Shiro exactly as if he were a human being, so he offered the cakes to his spirit.

Well, the old people waited for a few days, but there was no appearance of their tub being returned. The O jii San, thinking he would just ask for it, went to the neighbour, and found him sitting in front of his oven, piling wood on the fire.

'Oh, is it your tub that you want?' he said. 'As for your tub, I chopped it up and am now putting it on the fire.'

'Chopped up my tub!'

'As it is borrowed from you, of course I would not chop it up without a reason,' said the neighbour; 'but I borrowed it on purpose to

make *awa mochi* to offer to the dead Shiro; and yet when I put in the millet nothing but black mud came out of the tub, which of course was very disagreeable for us; so I thought I had better chop up such a useless tub.'

'I am really very sorry that such a thing should have happened to you; but if you had only asked me, we have plenty of *awa mochi* in the house, and could easily have given you some. However, as you have already burnt it, why, it can't be helped; but, as Shiro was buried under that tree, I think that I should like to keep some of the ashes.'

'Oh, as for the ashes, you may take as many of them as you like.'

So the O jii San took a basketful of ashes; and what he was thinking of one does not know, but he scattered them about the garden. And then a most extraordinary thing happened.

A plum tree and a cherry tree, which had been quite withered, suddenly went 'Pop!' and burst into flower. And such flowers they were, too! It was as if you saw Jokigase and Yoshino (places celebrated for blossom) at one glance.[1]

'Well, this *is* beautiful!' said the O jii San, and he put away the remaining ashes most carefully.

Shortly after this an unknown samurai (knight) came to the O jii San's house.

[1] The Japanese are especially fond of the plum and cherry blossoms. They do not cultivate these trees for their fruit, but for their flowers, and when the blossom is out there is a general holiday-making, while parties are made up to go and 'view the blossoms.' A favourite tree is as much cherished as a favourite dog would be in England, and Japanese literature is full of allusions to these blossoms.

'My name is Nuikashi,' said he, 'and I am the retainer of a great daimio. In my master's grounds is a favourite cherry tree, which, alas! has withered. The gardener is perfectly exhausted with his efforts to revive it, and we are all much troubled. But we have heard that you possess some wonderful kind of ashes that make withered trees flower. If that is the case, I beg of you to come to the palace and help us.'

'It is indeed true what you have condescended to hear, and I shall feel honoured in being allowed to bring my humble ashes to your honourable dwelling,' said the O jii San, bowing down to the ground.

'Please come with me as soon as possible,' said the samurai; and they soon started, the samurai walking first, and the O jii San carefully carrying the precious ashes behind.

When the daimio (a great feudal lord is called a daimio) saw the O jii San, he said—

'Is this the O jii San I have heard of?'

'Yes,' said the O jii San. 'Owing to your most condescending orders I have ventured to intrude myself into your honourable presence. It is a great distinction for me.'

'O jii San,' said the daimio, 'having heard of your wonderful ashes, I wish to see their effect.'

So they went to the withered tree.

The O jii San, gathering up his courage, took the basket of ashes, and carefully choosing his footing, climbed up the cherry tree; then, selecting the nicest-looking ashes, he threw them at the top branches.

And then a most strange thing happened. The moment the ashes touched the branches there was a 'Pop!' and the

withered tree burst into such brilliant flower that it quite dazzled one to look at it.

The daimio was extremely delighted. He at once invited the O jii San to the palace, where there was a splendid repast. The daimio not only praised the O jii San, but he gave him money and perfect mountains of dresses and splendid things, and he also said that the O jii San was always to be known as 'The O jii San who makes the cherries blossom;' which every one thought a most charming name.

Meanwhile, the neighbour had been very unhappy, for

he had borrowed Shiro in the hope of getting golden guineas, and he had borrowed the tub in the hope of getting *awa mochi*, and each time he had been bitterly disappointed. When he heard that the O jii San had been to the palace, and had received splendid gifts and a charming name from the daimio, and all by his clever use of the ashes, his astonishment knew no bounds.

'What, the ashes of the tub!' he cried. 'Why, if I had only thought of it, I could have done that too; but I believe that there are still some left in my house.' But there were none of the ashes of the tub in the house; so he just took some common ashes, and, putting them into a basket, he went into the street and began calling out in a loud voice, 'I am the celebrated old man that makes the trees blossom,' and 'Who wants their trees to blossom?' Now, the daimio's attendants knew that their master was in want of some amusement, so they told the neighbour to come to the palace. But when the daimio saw him he said, 'That is not the same man; but, of course, it may be a pupil whom he has taught.'

The neighbour bowed down and said, 'I beg your honourable pardon. I am no one's pupil. The man who came to you lately only imitated me.'

'What! was he only your imitator? Then you will be able to do something very wonderful.'

So they went to a withered tree in the garden, and the neighbour, remembering what he had heard of the O jii San doing, took the nicest-looking ashes and threw them at the tree. But the withered tree remained a withered tree just the same. So he threw some more, then some

more, but there was no appearance of even a bud. So then, with all his might, he threw the whole basketful. Then there was a scene of great confusion, for the wind carried the ashes all about the garden, and they blew into the eyes of the attendants, and even into the eyes of the daimio himself. And he was naturally very angry. 'You are the imitator,' he cried, and by his orders the angry attendants seized the neighbour, and binding him with ropes, put him in prison for being such an impostor.

But the O jii San, what with the guineas that Shiro had found for him and the presents he had received from the daimio, became a rich man, and lived peaceably and happily ever after.

III

KACHI KACHI MOUNTAIN[1]

ONCE there was an O jii San who was much troubled by a most mischievous Old Badger, who used to come out of his hole every night and do a great deal of damage in the O jii San's garden.

But at last the Old Badger was caught in a trap.

'O baa San,' called the O jii San to his wife, 'I have caught that wicked Old Badger. He will no longer come out at night and destroy our garden. To-night we will make him into badger soup.'

And so saying, the O jii San tied the Old Badger's legs together, and hung him up to one of the rafters of the kitchen, and went away rejoicing, to his daily work.

The Old Badger, left hanging from the kitchen rafters, had plenty of time for thought, and he began to plan a way of escape, and at last in his craftiness he hit upon a plan that seemed hopeful. The O baa San was in the kitchen pounding millet with a big hammer.

[1] The belief in the miraculous powers of the fox and the badger is among one of the most deeply-rooted superstitions in Japan. Fox-shrines are to be found in every village, and even in lonely woods. It is believed that foxes and badgers can not only enter into people and bewitch them, but also that they can assume the form of human beings. There is a special place where fox-bewitched people are treated for cure.

'O baa San,' said the Old Badger, 'it really is too bad that such an old woman as you are should have such heavy work to do. It must be very trying for you. Do let me do it for you.'

'No, no,' said the O baa San, shaking her grey head. 'If anything should happen while the O jii San is away, how I would be scolded! But thank you for your kindness all the same.'

But the Old Badger was a cunning creature, and he went on in a purring tone of voice—

'Your caution is quite right; but you need not imagine that I would do anything so bad as run away, when once I have been caught. But as I am hanging here with nothing to do, why should I not help you for a bit? Do try me.'

And so he went on gently persuading her, till at last the O baa San, who was a good old creature, and never thought of any one telling lies, untied the rope and, letting him free, handed him the hammer.

'Well, then, take it for a little,' she said.

But the wicked Old Badger, instead of pounding the millet, as he had so faithfully promised to do, suddenly fell on the O baa San and, knocking her on the head, killed her on the spot, and then assuming the shape of the O baa San (as foxes and badgers have the power of doing), he sat down to await the return of the O jii San. Towards evening the O jii San, little dreaming of what had taken place, came home.

'O baa San,' he called out to his wife, 'have you made that Old Badger into soup? Let us have supper.'

The O baa San brought the supper, and he sat down to eat it, when suddenly the O baa San jumped up.

'Ah! O jii San, you won't find much supper there, and as for the O baa San, I have killed her. I am the badger you thought you had tied up so securely.' And with a frisk of his tail off he ran.

The O jii San was much too much astonished to run after him. He sat down and began to weep very bitterly.

'Oh, that wicked Old Badger! Has he really killed my poor old wife? What shall I do without her?'

As he sat on his veranda, weeping, he heard a gentle voice beside him.

'O jii San, why are you weeping?'

The O jii San, looking up, saw the White Rabbit, who lived near by. He was a very different creature from the Old Badger, being a creature of a most amiable disposition.

'Ah, is it you, Mr. White Rabbit?' said the O jii San. 'Thank you for asking, but that wicked Old Badger has killed my poor wife. Is it not dreadful?' and he told the whole story. The White Rabbit, listening, felt very sorry for him.

'It is indeed dreadful, but do not you trouble about

punishing the murderer. I will take that on myself. He shall not go free.'

'How strange it is,' said the O jii San, 'that two such different creatures should belong to the same tribe! The one so kind-hearted, and the other so wicked.'

'Trust to me,' said the White Rabbit; and he set off home. But on his way he thought he would go at once, and see if he could carry out a plan of vengeance. So he went to the hole of the Old Badger.

Now, the Badger, knowing quite well that he had done a very wicked thing, and having a very bad conscience, was keeping in the very back of his hole.

'Mr. Badger,' called out the White Rabbit, 'what has happened to you? In this fine weather why do you keep in the back of your hole? You had better come with me to gather sticks on the mountain.'

When the Badger knew that it was only the White Rabbit, he did not feel so frightened.

'Well,' he said, 'I believe I'll come with you. I am feeling rather dull.'

So the two set out together, and they spent the day on the mountain-side collecting sticks, and when it was evening they tied them in bundles, and carrying them on their backs, set off home. As they were strolling along, the White Rabbit got a little behind the Badger, and slipping a flint out of his pocket, he struck a light and quietly set fire to the sticks on the Badger's back.

In a minute or two the Badger said, 'Mr. Rabbit, what is that sound I hear, like Kachi, Kachi?'

'Oh,' said the White Rabbit, with an unconcerned face,

'don't you know that this mountain is called Kachi Kachi Mountain? and so as I go along I keep saying to myself, Kachi Kachi, Kachi Kachi.'

'Oh, but, Mr. Rabbit, now I hear a sound like Bo, Bo just behind my ear. Do see what it is.'

'Oh,' said the White Rabbit, 'did you not know that the mountain has two names? and I first say one, and then the other—Kachi Kachi, Bo, Bo.'

But at that moment the fire touched the Badger's back, and he screamed out, 'I am on fire!' and began rushing along. The White Rabbit said to himself, 'This is the punishment of a wicked Old Badger;' and so, though he pretended to be much surprised and concerned, he really kept fanning up the flame. The Badger set off as fast as he could to his own hole, for help to put out the fire. The White Rabbit did not follow him, but next day he went to inquire for him.

'Mr. Badger,' he called out, 'were you burnt? How are you?'

The Badger came out with his head all bound up with a towel.

'Oh, Mr. Rabbit,' he said, 'what a dreadful time I had yesterday!'

'Well,' said the Rabbit, 'I just brought you along this pot of stuff to rub on your burn;' and so saying he handed him a bottle of strong acid.

'That is very kind of you, and if you will excuse me I will just rub it on at once.'

But no sooner had he done so than he jumped up, frantic with the pain, and rushed into the darkness of his hole.

The Rabbit, still determined to put an end to the life of the wicked Old Badger, returned to his own hole, meaning to wait a little. But one day he saw the Badger coming towards him.

'Well, Mr. Badger, how are you? Shall we go for another walk?'

'Not to Kachi Kachi Mountain again,' said the Badger.

'No,' said the Rabbit. 'Well, then, we might go to the sea-shore.'

'Yes,' said the Badger. 'That would be amusing.'

'I will get ready a boat,' said the Rabbit, 'and we will go for a row on the water.'

The Rabbit at once set to work to prepare two boats; one he made for himself of wood, and one for the Badger which was only made of mud, hardened and made to look all right.

The Old Badger came back in a few days.

'Well, Mr. Rabbit, how about the boats?'

'They are all right,' said the White Rabbit. 'Let us start at once.'

So they went down to the sea-shore, where they embarked, the White Rabbit in the wooden, the Badger in the clay boat.

'What a beautiful view!' said the White Rabbit.

'Yes, indeed,' said the Badger; 'and what a delicious thing it is to be on the water on such a calm day!'

'But it is not very amusing just to paddle about,' said the Rabbit. 'Let us have a race.'

'All right,' said the Badger. 'But we must start together. Now then, one, two, three, off!'

And the Badger and the Rabbit both started pulling as hard as they could; but the Badger's boat being only of clay, he could not get it along, and as he pulled it began to crumble away, and the water to come in.

'Oh, help, help!' he cried. 'Mr. Rabbit, wait for me. My boat is coming to pieces!'

Then the White Rabbit stopped rowing, and standing up he said—

'Oh, you wicked Old Badger! Who killed the innocent O baa San? I have taken on myself to avenge her. The burning you got on Kachi Kachi Mountain, and the acid I gave you for your burns were all part of the punishment. And now your end has come.'

And lifting up his oar, he gave one blow to the boat, which broke all in pieces, and the Badger sank into the water.

Then the White Rabbit, having carried out his promise, returned to the O jii San, and told him all that had happened; and the O jii San, rejoicing that wickedness had received its just punishment, spread a magnificent feast before the White Rabbit, and begged him from that time to live in the house, and look upon himself as one of the family.

IV

THE MAN WITH THE WEN[1]

ONCE, long ago, there was an unfortunate O jii San, who had a large wen on his right cheek. It was a great trial to him, and he had gone to many doctors about it, and used much medicine, but it only grew worse and worse.

One day the O jii San went to the mountain to gather wood. All day long he was tramping about hither and

[1] This story first appeared in a collection of Japanese stories which was published in 1664, but it is supposed in Japan to date from a much earlier time. In Volume III. of the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society* there is a paper which draws attention to the similarity between this story and an Irish legend, called the Legend of Knockgrafton. The writer of the paper makes the following remarks :—

'The stories are unmistakably identical. Can it be supposed that the leading idea—that of the taking off the hump, or wen, of one man, by the agency of elves, and clapping it on to another man in reward for his envy and want of skill—came into the heads of two different story-tellers, one a Celt and the other a Japanese, independently? Is it credible that one of these stories is not borrowed from the other? But if so, then at what age of the world did the loan take place, and which country was the lender, and which the borrower? As we know of no recent epoch at which the communication from one country to the other is likely to have taken place, we are led to think that this story may be one of the most ancient traditions of the human race, and that it may date from a time far anterior to history, when a Turanian tribe occupied Iceland, preceding the Celtic tribes, who are now the oldest stratum of humanity remaining in the Far West.'

I am far from agreeing with this writer as to the impossibility of two story-tellers of different races hitting on the same idea; but it would be interesting to know in how many countries this tale is known in some form. If it is one of the oldest traditions, it would be found in other countries besides Japan and Ireland.

thither, and it was only towards evening that he gathered together his load and began to descend the mountain; but just then the sky became suddenly overcast, and down came a torrent of rain.

'Dear, dear,' thought the O jii San, 'just when I am miles from any shelter! What is to be done?'

But at that moment he spied a big tree, into whose hollow trunk he could easily creep. Most thankful he was for the shelter, for the rain came down, and the thunder rolled in such a way as to make the poor old man feel half dead with fright.

However, it was only a thunderstorm, and it began gradually to clear, and at last the O jii San saw the rays of the setting sun shining on the opposite mountain.

'Well, I had better be getting home,' thought he; but just as he was going to creep out of the tree he heard a tramp of feet.

'That must be other woodcutters who have been caught like me; I may as well go along with them;' and he put out his head to call to them. But, to his amazement, instead of the peaceful woodcutters he expected to see, a very different sight met his eyes.

There came dancing along the mountain-side a troop of one-horned, three-eyed, crocodile-mouthed demons and elves, the red ones dressed in bear-skins, the green ones in tiger-skins; there were at least a hundred of them, all with wands in their hands.[1]

[1] In Japan women-ghosts, demons, and elves have one eye; men-ghosts have three; mortals only have two eyes. Demons are divided into red and green.

The poor old O jii San fell back into the tree with fright. Fortunately, the demons had not seen him, and there he lay, hardly able to breathe.

The demons stopped quite near the tree, and as the sounds of their merriment grew louder the O jii San thought he might venture to peep out.

'They are having a good time. What can they be doing?'

So he put out his head a little and watched them. One, who seemed to be the master-demon, stood in the centre, while the others danced and sang.

'It seems to be a kind of social gathering of demons,' said the O jii San to himself. 'Well, well, that is a funny thing! I am an old man, and have come to this mountain nearly every day, but it is the first time I have seen such a strange sight.' And he crept out a little further.

'Now then, my men,' said the master-demon, who was drinking wine out of a big goblet, 'have you nothing newer than that to show me? These are just the same old dances that you have gone through so often before.'

'Well,' thought the O jii San, 'if that is the case, why should I not show them something new? As the demons are so fond of dances, I don't believe they will hurt me. I'll just try.' And feeling inspirited by the lively chorus that the demons were singing, he ran out.

The demons were much startled when this unexpected old man ran into the midst of them.

The O jii San danced like a man who knows that his life depends on what he is doing.

'Well done!' cried one demon. 'That's good!' shouted another; and when the O jii San at last, quite worn out, came to a stop, the master-demon handed him the wine-bowl.

'It has really been most amusing,' he said, 'and we are much obliged to you.'

The O jii San bowed. 'It is very good of you to excuse my interruption of your feast, and I am delighted to have given you any amusement.'

'You must do it again.'

'Certainly,' said the O jii San.

'To-morrow,' said the demon.

'Yes, to-morrow.'

'But what proof have we that you will come? You must give us some pledge.'

'What can I give you?' asked the O jii San.

The demons held a consultation, and then one of them, with a very knowing look, got up and spoke.

'We must, of course, take something that he values. I have always heard that mortals consider a wen a very lucky thing to have. You see that O jii San has one on his right cheek; let us take that.'

'That is a brilliant idea,' said the others. 'We will do so.'

And, to the amazement of the O jii San, in a moment the demons, both red and green, and his wen had all vanished.

'That troublesome thing gone, and without even a twinge of pain! Most astounding! I wish I had come to the demons a little sooner.'

He hurried home, and his old wife was delighted to see him appear.

'And what did you do in the rain?' she said. 'Come in quick and rest.'

And just then, looking at him, she saw the change in his face.

'What has happened?' she exclaimed.

'You may well ask,' said the O jii San; and then he told her the whole story.

'Well, well,' she said, 'now is not that a good thing? But what are the demons going to do with the wen, I wonder?'

Now, it just so happened that the next-door neighbour

was an old man, who had a wen on his left cheek which gave him great trouble. When he heard the O jii San's story, he felt very envious. He came along to the O jii San's house, and said—

'Is it true that yesterday you met with demons, who took off your wen?'

'Perfectly true.'

'Well, if that is the case, I think I will just go to the mountain and see if they will do the same for me.'

'Very well,' said the O jii San; 'I will tell you where they are to be found.'

Then he most kindly gave him full directions, and the neighbour joyfully set off to go up the hill.

'Ah, there is the tree! Now I must creep into the trunk and wait.'

When evening came, he heard the tramp of feet, and, just as before, the demons stopped in front of the tree and began their festivities.

'Is the old man not coming to dance?' said the master-demon, looking round.

'Here I am, here I am!' cried the neighbour, running out. 'I have been waiting for you;' and he took out his fan, and began to dance and sing as hard as he could.

But he was a clumsy old man, who had never studied even the first rules of dancing, and the demons soon saw that he was just jumping about.

'That's not like yesterday!'

'That won't do!'

'Here, take back your pledge and go!'

And the neighbour, trembling for his life, was soon running down the mountain-side with a wen on either cheek.

V

THE MAGIC MIRROR

LONG ago, in the province of Echigo, there lived a man and his wife who had one child, a daughter, who was the joy of their hearts.

It happened one day that the father had to go to the capital, which in those days was Kyoto, not Tokyo, on business.

'It is a long way,' said his wife, 'and there are many dangers; condescend to take care of yourself, and return quickly.'

'I will be so good while you are away,' said the little daughter. 'Please bring me something from the capital.'

The mother and daughter accompanied him to the gate, and stood watching till his big sun-hat disappeared in the distance.

'Now he is really gone, and you must keep house with mother, and we will play at dolls' tea-party,' said the mother.

The days passed quickly away, and when his business was finished the father came back. His face was so brown with the sun that no one but his wife and child could recognize him. When he had rested a little after his journey he opened his travelling-basket.

'This is for you,' he said, taking out a doll and handing it to the little girl, who, trembling with delight, stretched out her little hands, delicate as the leaves of the maple, to receive it.

'And this is for you,' he said, handing a mirror to his wife.

Now, his wife, having lived entirely in the mountains, had never before seen a mirror.

'What is it?' she said.

'That is a mirror,' said the husband, laughing, 'and it reflects your face. As the sword is the emblem of a man, so the mirror is the emblem of a woman. And, you know, a mirror is one of the three sacred treasures of Japan. Here in the country it is impossible to buy one, but in the towns they are to be bought. You must take care of it.'

'Indeed I will,' said the wife, much delighted. 'I will look upon it as my emblem, and will keep it carefully in this box.'

The father, mother, and daughter were very happy together; but in this world things never go on long the same. The moon is not always round, flowers are not always in blossom, and happiness does not go on for ever, and a sudden sorrow came to this family—the mother fell ill. At first it was only a cold, but as the days passed she gradually grew worse, and at last the doctor threw away the spoon.[1]

The daughter never left her mother's side. It was she

[1] In olden times, before European medicine was introduced, the doctor signified that he gave up hope by throwing away the spoon for the medicine.

who rubbed her and gave her medicines, and attended to her night and day.

One night the mother, calling the daughter to her side, said, 'When I am dead you must be very dutiful to your father.'

'Do not speak of such things,' said the daughter. 'You must get well.'

'No,' said the mother, 'I am dying. My death now is

probably a punishment for some sin I have committed in a previous state of existence.[1] But I have something that I wish to give you; and so saying she took from under her pillow a box. 'A long time ago,' she said, 'when you

[1] According to the theory of transmigration, punishment is endured for sins committed in a former state.

were a little girl, your father went once to the capital, and he brought me back a very wonderful present. Now, after I am dead, if you think longingly of me, take out the thing that you will find inside this box, and look at it. When you do so my spirit will meet yours, and you will be comforted.'

Soon after this the mother passed away. The grief of the father and daughter was great, and as the days passed away the girl's heart grew no lighter. The sound of the wind in the trees, and the dropping of the rain,—everything reminded her of her mother. One day she suddenly recollected her mother's words, which in her grief she had forgotten, and running to the box, opened it, and took out the mirror. She gazed at it in astonishment, for there before her she saw her mother's face, only younger and more beautiful than it had been during her illness. The face appeared to smile at her, and it seemed as if her mother were on the point of opening her lips and speaking to her. The daughter was much astonished.

'Then it was quite true what she said, that I was to look at this if I was longing for her, and I would be comforted. Oh, how joyful! Now I can always meet her spirit.'

After a year had passed away the father, at the earnest desire of his relatives, took another wife. The daughter behaved to her just as if it had been her own mother, and the father was much pleased to see such peace and harmony between them. But this was only for a time. The step-mother began to change, and to treat the girl very unkindly, and to make all kinds of complaints about

her to the father. He, however, paid no attention to them; on the contrary, he treated his daughter all the more affectionately.

One day the step-mother came weeping to her husband.

'I have come to say farewell to you; I must leave your house,' she said.

The husband was much surprised. 'What do you mean?' he said. 'Do you dislike me?'

'Nothing would give me greater happiness than to remain always with you,' said his wife; 'it is only because I am in danger of my life that I wish to go.'

'Your life in danger!' he exclaimed. 'How can that be possible?'

'It is your daughter,' she answered. 'I am only her step-mother, and therefore she dislikes me, and has made a plan to kill me by magic. She sits in her room for hours and gazes at something in her hand, which I believe is my likeness in wood.'

The husband listened attentively to what his wife said, and although believing it to be a slander, still, remembering that the daughter did stay for hours in her own room, he saw that there was something at the bottom of it, so, wishing to solve the matter for himself, he went on tip-toe to his daughter's room.

Now, the poor girl had been very unhappy for some time, for she felt that her step-mother had changed towards her, and she knew of the unkind things she told the father. So her heart was very heavy, and her only pleasure was to steal away to her own room and look at the mirror. And on this day, as usual, she had taken it out, and was

sadly thinking of her happy life with her mother, when some one suddenly entered the room behind her. She quickly slipped the mirror into her sleeve.

'Why are you here all alone, sitting doing nothing?' said her father, very angrily.

She gave no answer.

'What did you hide just now?' he said in a severe tone; but she was too much surprised to make any reply.

'Then it is true what my wife says. You are always thinking of your own mother, and you have planned to kill your step-mother by magic arts. What evil spirit has taken possession of you, that you have such wicked thoughts?' and the father's anger rising more and more, he scolded the girl without waiting an answer, till at length she flung herself before him.

'Do not say such things about me!' she entreated. 'I am only a silly girl, but I have never had unkind thoughts about my step-mother. Believe me, I have never wished to hurt her in any way.'

But he would not believe her.

'If that is the case, why do you stay all alone, and why when I came in did you hide something in your sleeve?'

And so, as he still mistrusted her, she drew the mirror out of her sleeve and held it up.

'This is what I have been looking at,' she said.

'That!' said her father, much surprised. 'Why, that is the present I brought your mother from Kyoto. Why should you sit gazing at that?'

Then she told her father of her mother's dying words.

'I do not understand,' said her father. 'When you long

for your mother you look in this glass, and her spirit meets you? That is impossible.'

'Indeed I am telling you the truth,' said the girl. 'But look; do you not see my mother's spirit in this? I can see it always;' and she held the mirror up before her face.

Then the father suddenly understood what she had been thinking.

'I see,' he said to himself; 'it was a device of her mother to comfort the poor child, and she has all this time been mistaking her own face for that of her mother. Certainly they were as like each other as the two sides of a lemon, so perhaps it is not wonderful.' Then, turning to the girl, he said, 'And so all the time that we thought you were plotting some magic arts you were really looking at your mother! We have indeed been unjust to you.'

At that moment the step-mother, who had been listening behind the paper walls, came in, and kneeling down in front of the girl said—

'You must forgive me. When I saw you constantly sitting on the floor looking at something that you would not show to others, I grew suspicious, and gradually came to have these bad thoughts about you. But please forgive me, and let us drown in the sea the thought of all that has passed. I cannot but admire your love for your own mother.'

The father was much delighted at this happy ending to their unhappiness, and they were ever after a most united family.

VI

THE LUCKY HUNTER AND THE SKILFUL FISHER

LONG, long ago there lived a prince named Hiko-hoho-de-mi-no-mikoto. He was gifted beyond ordinary men, but as he more especially excelled in the chase, he was known as the Lucky Hunter.

Now, this prince had an elder brother who was above all things skilful in fishing, for which reason he was known as the Skilful Fisher. It was the daily amusement of these brothers to go out, the one to the mountains and the other to his fishing, till one day the Lucky Hunter said to his brother—

'Sir, every day you go out with your net and I with my bow and arrow. But really it is rather dull to do the same thing every day; let us change, and you go to the mountains, while I go to the sea. It will be more amusing to have a change.'

'Well, I believe you are right,' said the elder brother; and taking the bow and arrow, he went off to the mountains, while the Lucky Hunter went a-fishing.

Choosing a comfortable rock, the Lucky Hunter seated himself, and proceeded to put the hook on to the line, and then threw it. He watched anxiously, and when there was the slightest movement he drew it in and looked.

But by the end of the day the Lucky Hunter, who could hit the swiftest flying sparrow, had not caught one of the little fish which were just under his nose, and, terrible to relate, his elder brother's hook had disappeared.

'Oh, horrors!' he said, 'it is my elder brother's most treasured possession;' and he began to hunt for it.

Now, the Skilful Fisher, having also undertaken something that he was not accustomed to, was equally unsuccessful, and as he was coming back, looking very cross, he met his brother on the beach.

'What are you doing here?' he said.

'Sir,' said the younger brother, 'I have done a most inexcusable thing;' and then he told the whole story.

'You have lost my hook!' said the elder brother in a towering passion. 'I went out hunting just to please you, and then you go and lose my hook. Well, you had better find it quickly, for you won't get back your bow and arrows until you do.'

So the Lucky Hunter, feeling that his elder brother had every excuse for being angry, and that it was entirely his own fault, went on searching and searching, but there was no trace of the hook. Then, knowing that it really was no good to go on searching any longer, he took his sword and hammered it into five hundred hooks, which he offered to his elder brother with a humble apology. But his brother would not listen. Then he made five hundred more, and offered them to him.

'If you bring me a million hooks,' said the Skilful Fisher, 'it won't make any difference. I will not forgive you until I see my own hook.'

And he would not be appeased. The fact of the matter was that the Skilful Fisher was a bad man, who had long been envious of his brother's virtues, and had been plotting to take his position.

So the Lucky Hunter, in obedience to his elder brother, went back to the sea-shore to look for the hook. But there was still no trace of it.

Now, as he sat disconsolately on the sea beach, an old man suddenly appeared beside him, and, looking at him, said—

'How is it that the Prince comes to be on the sea-shore all alone?'

'I am in great difficulties,' said the Lucky Hunter. 'I have lost my brother's hook, and cannot find it. But who are you?'

'I am known as the old man of the salt earth, and I feel

very sorry for you; but, to tell the truth, I think that the hook is by now either at the bottom of the sea, or else it is inside some fish, so that it is no use your looking for it here.'

'But what can I do?' asked the Prince.

'There is nothing for it but to go to Dragon Land and ask the King to help you,' replied the old man.

'That is a good idea,' said the Prince; 'but where is Dragon Land? and how am I to get there? It is somewhere far away in the sea.'

'Do not trouble yourself about that,' said the old man. 'I will take the liberty of showing you how it can be managed.'

And the old man at once began preparations, and soon brought to the Prince a basket which would serve for a boat. The Prince was delighted, and standing in it, set off.

'If I am successful in getting the hook, you shall certainly be largely rewarded,' he said.

The old man repeated again his directions for the journey, and the Lucky Hunter was soon floating away over the blue sea.

The Dragon Land being far, far away, he thought it would be a long time before he arrived, but suddenly there rose out of the sea a cluster of beautiful buildings. There was a handsome gate, behind which were houses with beautifully glittering roofs, and in front of the gate there was a large tree overshadowing a well. But, unfortunately, there was no one in sight. So the Prince resolved to take a few minutes' rest, and climbing up into the tree, he settled himself among the branches.

Just as he had done so there was a creak, creak, and the gate was opened, and two beautiful damsels came out. This being Dragon Land, you would expect the inhabitants to be dragons or snakes, but these two women were beautiful beyond ordinary mortals. The Lucky Hunter was speechless with astonishment, and leaning down from the tree, he watched breathlessly.

The damsels, not knowing that they were being watched, were just going to draw some water, when, looking down, they were startled to see the face of a noble-looking knight reflected in the well. Stepping back, they gazed up into the tree, where they saw a prince of such handsome appearance that they at once thought that he must have fallen from the skies.

The Lucky Hunter, being thus discovered, climbed down.

'I am a thirsty traveller,' he said. 'I stopped to drink from your well, but there was no pitcher. Pray draw me one cupful.'

The damsels hastened to draw some water, and presented a cupful to the Prince, who, drinking it, expressed his thanks, and then as he returned the cup he slipped into it a bead off his golden chain.

The damsels were still more astonished when they saw a bead from an imperial chain in their cup.

'It can be no ordinary man who gave that,' they whispered to each other, and then they politely asked his name.

'I am Hoho-de-mi-no-mikoto,' said the Lucky Hunter, smiling. 'And who are you?'

'Are you really that great Prince? We are the daughters of the Dragon King.'

'That is indeed fortunate for me,' said the Prince. 'Please to take me to your father.' And then he told them of his loss.

'Our father will be overpowered with joy at such an unexpected pleasure as a visit from your highness,' said the damsels; and they led the way through the gate.

The elder princess went first to tell her father, and he, anxious to do all honour to the descendant of the gods, called together his fish retainers and went forth to meet the Lucky Hunter, and taking him by the hand, led him into the house to the seat of honour, then bowing down before him, said—

'This is the first time that I have had the honour of meeting your highness. I hope that you will favour me with your kind friendship.'

The Lucky Hunter, politely returning his bow, said—

'Is this the Dragon King of whom I have heard so much? I am afraid that I am intruding on you.'

'Pray do not say such a thing,' said the Dragon King. 'It is very good of you to come to such a miserable hole.'

Then he called his retainers to bring a banquet, whereupon they placed before the Lucky Hunter all the delicacies of the ocean, piled mountains high, and while he partook of them damsels played on the *koto* and danced for his amusement. Indeed, they exerted both hand and head for his entertainment.

When he had been refreshed, the Lucky Hunter thus addressed the Dragon King—

'Sir, you have probably already heard from your daughters the reason of my coming here. I am troubling you very much, but please order a search to be made for the hook through your domain.'

The King forthwith commanded all his retainers to assemble. So they came, rank upon rank, all the chief dignitaries of the kingdom, the octopus, the cuttlefish, the bonito, the plaice, the oxtail fish, and many others. Then the King, addressing them, said—

'This is the Prince Hiko-hoho-de-mi-no-mikito. Now, yesterday, when the Prince was fishing off the coast of Japan he lost his hook, and thinking that some of you may know where it is, he has come down on purpose to look for it. Now, if any of you have stolen it, let him at once return it, or if any one knows where it is, let him at once come forward.'

At this unexpected speech the fishes looked at each other in amazement; but the plaice came bustling forward. 'If you will allow me to speak,' he said, 'I will express my opinion that Mr. Perch is the thief.'

'What ground have you for your suspicions?' said the King.

'From yesterday evening the perch has been quite unable to eat,' was the reply.

'It certainly looks bad that he has not appeared in answer to my summons,' said the King. 'Let him be brought to my presence at once.'

When the perch arrived, behold, instead of his usual scarlet face, he was pale and gasping for breath.

'Why did you not appear in answer to my summons? demanded the King.

'Because I was ill.'

'Silence! That is an excuse. You have swallowed the hook of the Prince.'

'It may be as you say; but if I did so, it was unconsciously, so please do not blame me; besides which, I am suffering great pain!' gasped the perch.

'There is no doubt,' said the plaice, 'that the hook is in the perch's throat, and I propose that it should at once be taken out and restored to his highness.'

'I am sure I ask nothing better,' said the perch.

Thereupon the plaice took up his position in front of the perch, who opened his mouth to the uttermost, and after a tug, tug, the hook was drawn out. They then cleaned it and, with a low obeisance, presented it to the Prince.

Having at last obtained what he had so earnestly been seeking, the Prince was much delighted, and repeatedly thanked the Dragon King by whose efforts it had been found. He also begged that the thief might be

pardoned; and the perch, flapping his fins, went joyfully home.

Now, having successfully got his hook, there was no longer any need for his remaining in Dragon Land; but the King and his daughters so earnestly besought him to stay a little longer, that the Lucky Hunter, not being stony-hearted, yielded to their entreaties.

In Dragon Land, as in this world, time slips very quickly by, and he found before long that he had been three years away from home. He began to think longingly of his country, so one day he said to the Dragon King—

'I have been intruding for long on your kindness, but as I am the governor of my country, I ought not to stay here any longer. Pray do not be offended if I say that I must go.'

The King and his court were plunged in grief.

'It would be too much to expect a descendant of the gods to remain long with us,' said the King. 'But may we ask that, as a result of your visit, there may be more intimacy between the inhabitants of the land and of the ocean?'

Then the two princesses came forward, each bearing a crystal ball in her hands.

'These are the family heirlooms of Dragon Land,' they said, 'and we wish to present them to you. They are known as "High Tide" and "Low Tide."'

'You are extremely kind,' said the Prince. 'May I ask the use of "High Tide"?'

'This ball,' said the Princess, 'has the strange property of being able to bring salt water sweeping over the driest ground. You have but to hold it up; and in the same way if you but hold up "Low Tide," whatever waters are near you they will at once retire. Therefore, O Prince, if you only carry these two balls about your person, no danger from drought nor from perilous waters can ever come near you.'

After they had fully explained the use of the balls, the Prince, with a broken voice, bade them farewell, and returned to Japan in a boat peculiar to Dragon Land—that is to say, the back of a crocodile.

The Lucky Hunter immediately sought out his elder brother, and presenting him with the hook, again politely apologized.

Now, during the absence of his brother, the Skilful Fisher had seized all his possessions and installed himself as governor of the country, so that when the Lucky

Hunter came back he was bitterly disappointed and filled with jealousy.

He then began to make plans for getting rid of him, so one day when they were walking together in a solitary place, he pulled out his sword to stab him.

But the Lucky Hunter, perceiving his brother's design, fortunately remembered the balls, and when he held 'High Tide' up, strange to say, great waves rolled in from every side, and the place quickly resembled a deep sea, in which his brother was struggling for his life.

Listening to his piteous cries for help, the Lucky Hunter felt compassion, and, pulling out 'Low Tide,' held it up, upon which the waters rapidly disappeared.

The Skilful Fisher, whose life had thus been spared to him, felt deeply repentant for his evil deeds, and earnestly besought his brother to let the remembrance of them be drowned in the salt waves.

Receiving his brother's pardon, he became quite a good man, and the whole country enjoyed peace and prosperity under the reign of the Lucky Hunter.

VII

THE SWORD OF THE ASSEMBLED CLOUDS OF HEAVEN[1]

EVERY one is aware that the first goddess of Japan was the great Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, who is now worshipped at Isé.

[1] The following story gives the accepted origin of one of the three Imperial Treasures of Japan.

The Mikado reigns over Japan in virtue of his unbroken descent from the Sun Goddess, the great Amaterasu. The numerous stories respecting her and her brother are mythological rather than fairy tales, and possess great interest for the historian. Nineteenth century advance has done much to sweep away the mystery which formerly surrounded the Mikado, but there are still many undivulged secrets in the Land of the Rising Sun, and among them is that which enfolds the Sacred Treasures. Where they are kept, and what exactly they are, is known to no one.

Sir Ernest Satow, in his paper on 'Ancient Japanese Rituals,' writes as follows :—

'The Mirror and Sword are two out of the three precious objects, regarded as the regalia of the Japanese sovereigns, the possession of which was the evidence of their title to reign.

'The third is a stone, or perhaps a necklace of stones ; of what kind is not precisely known.

'The Sword, Mirror, and Jewel were brought to Japan by the ancestor of the Mikados, the mythical grandson of the Sun Goddess.

'After the first priest princess had been in charge of the sacred symbols for some fifty-three years, in the course of which she had frequently removed them from one site to another, finding herself getting old and feeble, she delivered them into the care of her niece, who wandered about with her trust until B.C. 4, according to popular chronology, when she settled down at Isé, at a spot indicated by a revelation from the Sun Goddess.'

The Sword of the Assembled Clouds of Heaven

Now, the Sun Goddess had a younger brother called Susa, who was a very strong man, but of a turbulent nature, and his wild actions were the source of much trouble to his sister. Yet you could not call him a bad man, and so the great goddess generally forgave him, until one day his conduct was too bad for forgiveness, for he not only destroyed the weaving-loom which the Sun Goddess had set up, but he also killed the women who were working at it.

Then the Sun Goddess in her wrath retired into a cave, and shutting the door, declared that she would issue forth no more.

This was terrible, for as long as the goddess refused to appear there was no source of light, and Japan lay in deep darkness.

Then the other gods, in dismay, held a consultation; and the fear of perpetual night hanging over the land made every one lay plans for enticing the goddess out of her cave.

'We must soothe her wounded feelings, and in order to do that let us perform an interesting *kagura*,' said one.

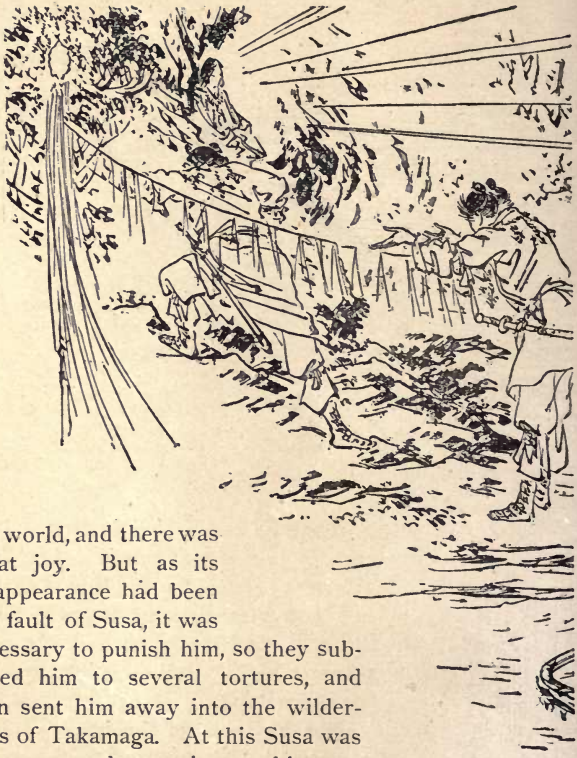
The other gods agreed to this, and preparations were at once begun for a great *kagura*.[1]

[1] Even the tourist who has only spent a few weeks in Japan must have occasionally come across a *kagura* being performed in the streets. On a temporary wooden platform two or three men clad in strange garments, with huge masks of the most fantastic shapes, walk about to the sound of flutes and drums, enacting a kind of play. The subjects are generally historical. The performances are usually near temples, being originally meant for the amusement of the god. The learned say that these performances owe their origin to the Sun Goddess's retirement into the cave.

They all assembled in front of her cave, and there was music and dancing, playing of flutes, and beating of drums.

'How very amusing it seems!' said the Sun Goddess to herself. 'I must take one look.' And, opening the door, she peeped out.

But as soon as the beam of light was seen which betrayed her presence, the god of great strength, seizing the door, forced it open, and she came forth. And so light once more entered



the world, and there was great joy. But as its disappearance had been the fault of Susa, it was necessary to punish him, so they subjected him to several tortures, and then sent him away into the wilderness of Takamaga. At this Susa was very angry; but as it was his own fault it could not be helped.

One day as he was standing by the river, he saw a chopstick floating down.

'Dear me,' he thought, 'a chop-stick for eating with! —then there must be people living up there.'

So he went up the stream, and before long he met an

old couple, leading between them a young girl. They were all weeping bitterly.

'Why do you weep?' asked Susa.

'I know not who you are,' replied the old man, 'but it is very kind of you to inquire into our grief. This is my daughter, the Lady Inada. I and my wife had eight daughters, but all except this one have been devoured by the eight-forked serpent. And to-night he comes to devour her also. There is no way of escape.'

'I feel truly sorry for you,' said Susa; 'but this serpent

that you speak of, what kind of a creature is he? I will go forth and destroy him.'

'Oh no; that would be too dangerous for you,' said the old man. 'If he were an ordinary serpent it might be done,

but this is a terrible monster with eight heads. If you go forth against him you will only be destroyed.'

'However many heads he has, that does not matter,' said Susa. 'I am the descendant

of the gods, and I cannot give way before a monster like that.'

The old couple were much surprised.

'How, then, have you come to such a place as this?' they said.

'I am the brother of the Sun Goddess; I am Susa,' he said.

'In that case our daughter is indeed saved!' they exclaimed with joy, and bowed down to the ground.

Then Susa began his preparations. He caused the old man to fill eight jars with saké, and to place them beside a great rock. Then he caused the Lady Inada to sit on the top of the rock, in such a way that her face was clearly reflected in all the eight jars.

'Now,' said Susa, 'you must sit here, and when the serpent comes you must on no account move.'

Susa himself hid in the shadow of the rock, and their watch began.

As the night came on, a wind bearing a strange fishy odour sprang up, great drops of rain began to fall, and the aspect of the place became very gloomy.

Suddenly under the shadow of the opposite mountain there appeared sixteen great balls of fire; but in reality they were not balls of fire, but the sixteen eyes of the eight-headed serpent.

'It has come!' exclaimed Susa to himself, and holding his breath and grasping his sword, he crept nearer. The monster, quite unconscious of what awaited him, came rapidly on, thinking to devour the Lady Inada. Suddenly he perceived her face in the eight jars.

Now, the serpent, being a mere reptile, has no true wisdom, and it never struck him that this was a plot to deceive him. He plunged his eight heads into the eight jars, and quickly drank up the saké, and as there was poison mixed with the saké, he almost at once fell down unconscious.

'Now is the time,' thought Susa, who had been watching, and he rushed out from under the shadow of the rock.

The monster, who was not dead, opened his eyes and showed his fangs, but as he was drunk, and as his opponent was a descendant of the gods, there was no hope for him, and he was very quickly destroyed, and the waters of the river became as red as rouge from the flow of his blood.

But Susa, fearing lest he should come alive again, began to cut up his body from the head to the tail.

And as he cut, his sword encountered something and broke.

'This is strange,' he thought, and looking, he saw a splendid sword in the serpent's body. 'I have hit upon a fine thing,' said he, drawing it forth.

Now, this sword he afterwards presented to the Sun Goddess, and it is known as the sword of the Assembled Clouds of Heaven, and is still one of the Imperial Treasures.

Now, Susa, having successfully killed the serpent, married the Lady Inada, and they lived happily ever after.

He also built a temple at Izumo, where he is worshipped to this very day.[1]

[1] Murray's *Guide Book to Japan*, published 1894, contains the following remarks upon the temples at Izumo :—

'The services are conducted by priests gorgeously arrayed in white and purple robes, with gold figuring. The chief priest, who boasts of being the eighty-second descendant in a direct line from the god Susa-no-o, used to be styled a god upon earth. From 200,000 to 250,000 pilgrims visit the great shrine yearly. On festal days the sound of the clapping of hands, to call the attention of the god, is unbroken, like the roar of a cataract.'

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